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A Budget of Paradoxes. By PROFESSOR DE MORGAN.

No. XI. 1819—1825.

(Continued from p. 48.)

The Mythological Astronomy of the ancients; part the second: or the key of Urania, the wards of which will unlock all the mysteries of antiquity. Norwich, 1823, 12mo.

A Companion to the Mythological Astronomy, &c., containing remarks on recent publications Norwich, 1824, 12mo.

A new Theory of the Earth and of planetary motion; in which it is demonstrated that the Sun is vicegerent of his own system. Norwich, 1825, 12mo.

The analyzation of the writings of the Jews, so far as they are found to have any connexion with the sublime science of astronomy. [This is pp. 97—180 of some other work, being all I have seen.]

These works are all by Sampson Arnold Mackey, for whom see *Notes and Queries*, 1st S., viii. 468, 565, ix. 89, 179. Had it not been for actual quotations given by one correspondent only (1st S., viii. 565), that journal would have handed him down as a man of some real learning. An extraordinary man he certainly was: it is not one illiterate shoemaker in a thousand who could work upon such a singular mass of Sanscrit and Greek words, without showing evidence of being able to read a line in any language but his own, or to spell that correctly. He was an uneducated Godfrey Higgins. A few extracts will put this in a strong light: one for history of science, one for astronomy, and one for philology:—

“Sir Isaac Newton was of opinion that ‘the atmosphere of the earth was the sensory of God; by which he was enabled to see quite round the earth’: which proves that Sir Isaac had no idea that God could see through the earth.”

“Sir Richard [Phillips] has given the most rational explanation of the cause of the earth’s elliptical orbit that I have ever seen in print. It is because the earth presents its watery hemisphere to the sun at one time and that of solid land the other; but why has he made his Oxonian astonished at the coincidence? It is what I taught in my attic twelve years before.”

“Again, admitting that the Eloim were powerful and intelligent beings that managed these things, we would accuse *them* of being the authors of all the sufferings of Chrisna. And as they and the constellation of Leo were below the horizon, and consequently cut off from the end of the zodiac, there were but eleven constellations of the zodiac to be seen; the three at the end were wanted, but those three would be accused of bringing Chrisna into the troubles which at last ended in his death. All this would be expressed in the Eastern language by saying that Chrisna was persecuted by those Judoth Ishcarioth!!!! [the five notes of exclamation are the author’s]. But the astronomy of those distant ages, when the sun was at the south pole in winter, would leave five of those Decans cut off from our view, in the latitude of twenty-eight degrees; hence Chrisna died of wounds from five Decans, but the whole five may be included in Judoth Ishcarioth! for the

phrase means *the men that are wanted at the extreme parts*. Ishcarioth is a compound of *ish*, a man, and *carat* wanted or taken away, and *oth* the plural termination, more ancient than *im*. . . ."

I might show at length how Michael is the sun, and the D'-ev-'l, in French Di-ob-al, also 'L-evi-aith-an—the *evi* being the radical part both of *devil* and *leviathan*—is the Nile, which the sun dried up for Moses to pass: a battle celebrated by Jude. Also how *Moses*, the same name as *Muses*, is from *mesha*, drawn out of the water, "and hence we called our land which is saved from the water by the name of *marsh*." But it will be of more use to collect the character of S. A. M. from such correspondents of *Notes and Queries* as have written after superficial examination. Great astronomical and philological attainments; much ability and learning; had evidently read and studied deeply; remarkable for the originality of his views upon the very abstruse subject of mythological astronomy, in which he exhibited great sagacity. Certainly his views were *original*; but their sagacity, if it be allowable to copy his own mode of etymologizing, is of an *ori-gin-ale* cast, resembling that of a person who puts to his mouth liquors both distilled and fermented.

No. XII. 1825.

John Walsh, of Cork (1786—1847).—This discoverer has had the honour of a biography from Prof. Boole, who, at my request, collected information about him on the scene of his labours. It is in the *Philosophical Magazine* for November, 1851, and will, I hope, be transferred to some biographical collection where it may find a larger class of readers. It is the best biography of a single hero of the kind that I know. Mr. Walsh introduced himself to me, as he did to many others, in the anterowlandian days of the Post-Office; his unpaid letters were double, treble, &c. They contained his pamphlets, and cost their weight in silver: all have the name of the author and all are in octavo or in quarto letter-form; most are in four pages; and all dated from Cork. I have the following by me:—

The Geometric Base. 1825.—The theory of plane angles. 1827.—Three letters to Dr. Francis Sadleir. 1838.—The invention of polar geometry. By Irelandus. 1839.—The theory of partial functions. Letter to Lord Brougham. 1839.—On the invention of polar geometry. 1839.—Letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Review. 1840.—Irish Manufacture. A new method of tangents. 1841.—The normal diameter in curves. 1843.—Letter to Sir R. Peel. 1845. [Hints that Government should compel the introduction of Walsh's Geometry into Universities.]—Solution of Equations of the higher orders. 1845.

Besides these, there is a "Metalogia," and I know not how many others.

Mr. Boole, who has taken the moral and social features of Walsh's delusions from the commiserating point of view, which makes ridicule out of place, has been obliged to treat Walsh as Scott's Alan Fairford treated his client Peter Peebles; namely, keep the scarecrow out of court while his case was argued. My plan requires me to bring him in: and when he comes in at the door, pity and sympathy fly out at the window. Let the reader remember that he was not an ignoramus in mathematics: he might have won his spurs if he could have first served as an esquire. Though so illiterate that even in Ireland he never picked up anything more Latin than *Irelandus*, he was a very pretty mathematician spoiled in the making by intense self-opinion.

This is part of a private letter to me at the back of a page of print: I had never addressed a word to him:—

"There are no limits in mathematics, and those that assert there are, are infinite ruffians, ignorant, lying blackguards. There is no differential calculus, no Taylor's theorem, no calculus of variations, &c., in mathematics.

There is no quackery whatever in mathematics; no $\frac{0}{0}$ equal to anything.

What sheer ignorant blackguardism that!

"In mechanics the parallelogram of force is quackery, and is dangerous; for nothing is at rest, or in uniform, or in rectilinear motion, in the universe. Variable motion is an essential property of matter. Laplace's demonstration of the parallelogram of forces is a begging of the question; and the attempts of them all to show that the difference of twenty minutes between the sidereal and actual revolution of the earth round the sun arises from the tugging of the Sun and Moon at the pot-belly of the earth, without being sure even that the earth has a pot-belly at all, is perfect quackery. The said difference arising from and demonstrating the revolution of the Sun itself round some distant centre."

In the letter to Lord Brougham we read as follows:—

"I ask the Royal Society of London, I ask the Saxon crew of that crazy hulk, where is the dogma of their philosophic god now? . . . When the Royal Society of London, and the Academy of Sciences at Paris, shall have read this memorandum, how will they appear? Like two cur dogs in the paws of the noblest beast of the forest. . . . Just as this note was going to press, a volume lately published by you was put into my hands, wherein you attempt to defend the fluxions and Principia of Newton. Man! what are you about? You come forward now with your special pleading, and fraught with national prejudice, to defend, like the philosopher Grassi, the persecutor of Galileo, principles and reasoning which, unless you are actually insane, or an ignorant quack in mathematics, you know are mathematically false. What a moral lesson this for the students of the University of London from its head! Man! demonstrate corollary 3, in this note, by the lying dogma of Newton, or turn your thoughts to something you understand.

"WALSH IRLANDUS."

Mr. Walsh—honour to his memory—once had the consideration to save me postage by addressing a pamphlet under cover to a Member of Parliament, with an explanatory letter. In that letter he gives a candid opinion of himself:—

(1838.) “Mr. Walsh takes leave to send the enclosed corrected copy to Mr. Hutton as one of the Council of the University of London, and to save postage for the Professor of mathematics there. He will find in it geometry more deep and subtle, and at the same time more simple and elegant, than it was ever contemplated human genius could invent.”

He then proceeds to set forth that a certain “tomfoolery lemma,” with its “tomfoolery” superstructure, “never had existence outside the shallow brains of its inventor,” Euclid. He then proceeds thus:—

“The same spirit that animated those philosophers who sent Galileo to the Inquisition animates all the philosophers of the present day without exception. If anything can free them from the yoke of error, it is the [Walsh] problem of double tangence. But free them it will, how deeply soever they may be sunk into mental slavery—and God knows that is deeply enough: and they bear it with an admirable grace; for none bear slavery with a better grace than tyrants. The lads must adopt my theory. . . . It will be a sad reverse for all our great professors to be compelled to become schoolboys in their gray years. But the sore scratch is to be compelled, as they had before been compelled one thousand years ago, to have recourse to Ireland for instruction.”

The following “Impromptu” is no doubt by Walsh himself: he was more of a poet than of an astronomer:—

“Through ages unfriended,
 With sophistry blended,
 Deep science in Chaos had slept;
 Its limits were fettered,
 Its voters unlettered,
 Its students in movements but crept.
 Till, despite of great foes,
 Great WALSH first arose,
 And with logical might did unravel
 Those mazes of knowledge,
 Ne’er known in a college,
 Though sought for with unceasing travail.
 With cheers we now hail him,
 May success never fail him,
 In Polar Geometrical mining;
 Till his foes be as tamed
 As his works are far-famed
 For true philosophic refining.”

Walsh’s system is, that all mathematics and physics are wrong: there is hardly one proposition in Euclid which is demonstrated.

His example ought to warn all who rely on their own evidence to their own success. He was not, properly speaking, insane; he only spoke his mind more freely than many others of his class. The poor fellow died in the Cork union, during the famine. He had lived a happy life, contemplating his own perfections, like Brahma on the lotos-leaf.

No. XIII. 1825—1830.

The motion of the Sun in the Ecliptic, proved to be uniform in a circular orbit. . . . with preliminary observations on the fallacy of the Solar System. By Bartholomew Prescott, 1825, 8vo.

The author had published, in 1803, a "*Defence of the Divine System*, which I never saw; also, *On the inverted scheme of Copernicus*. The above work is clever in its satire.

Manifesto of the Christian Evidence Society, established Nov. 12, 1824. Twenty-four plain questions to honest men.

There are two broadsides of August and November, 1826, signed by Robert Taylor, A.B., Orator of the Christian Evidence Society. This gentleman was a clergyman, and was convicted of blasphemy in 1827, for which he suffered imprisonment, and got the name of the *Devil's Chaplain*. The following are quotations:—

"For the book of Revelation, there was no original Greek at all, but *Erasmus* wrote it himself in Switzerland, in the year 1516. Bishop Marsh, vol. i., p. 320."—"Is not God the author of your reason? Can he then be the author of anything which is contrary to your reason? If reason be a sufficient guide, why should God give you any other; if it be not a sufficient guide, why has he given you *that*?"

I remember a votary of the Society being asked to substitute for *reason* "the right leg," and for *guide* "support," and to answer the two last questions: he said there must be a quibble, but he did not see what. It is pleasant to reflect that the *argumentum a carcere* is obsolete. One great defect of it was that it did not go far enough: there should have been laws against subscriptions for blasphemers, against dealing at their shops, and against rich widows marrying them.

Had I taken in theology, I must have entered books against Christianity. I mention the above, and Paine's *Age of Reason*, simply because they are the only English modern works that ever came in my way without my asking for them. The three parts of the *Age of Reason* were published in Paris 1793, Paris 1795, and New York, 1807. Carlisle's edition is of London, 1818, 8vo. It

must be republished when the time comes, to show what stuff governments and clergy were afraid of at the beginning of this century. I should never have seen the book, if it had not been prohibited; a bookseller put it under my nose with a fearful look round him; and I could do no less, in common curiosity, than buy a work which had been so complimented by church and state. And when I had read it, I said in my mind to church and state—"Confound you! you have taken me in worse than any reviewer I ever met with." I forget what I gave for the book, but I ought to have been able to claim compensation somewhere.

Cabbala Algebraica. Auctore Gul. Lud. Christmann. Stuttgard, 1827, 4to.

Eighty closely printed pages of an attempt to solve equations of every degree, which has a process called by the author *cabbala*. An anonymous correspondent spells *cabbala* as follows, $\chi\alpha\beta\beta\alpha\lambda\lambda$, and makes 666 out of its letters. This gentleman has sent me, since my budget commenced, a little heap of satirical communications, each having a 666 or two; for instance, alluding to my remarks on the spelling of *chemistry*, he finds the fated number in $\chi\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$. With these are challenges to explain them, and hints about the end of the world. All these letters have different fantastic seals; one of them with the legend "Keep your temper,"—another bearing "Bank token fivepence." The only signature is a triangle with a little circle in it, which I interpret to mean that the writer confesses himself to be the round man stuck in the three-cornered hole, to be explained as in Sydney Smith's joke.

The Celtic Druids. By Godfrey Higgins, Esq., of Shellow Grange, near Doncaster. London, 1827, 4to.

Anacalypsis, or an attempt to draw aside the veil of the Saltic Isis: or an inquiry into the origin of languages, nations, and religions. By Godfrey Higgins, &c. . . . London, 1836, 2 vols. 4to.

The first work had an additional preface and a new index in 1829. Possibly, in future time, will be found bound up with copies of the second work two sheets which Mr. Higgins circulated among his friends in 1831, the first a "Recapitulation," the second "Book vi., ch. 1."

The system of these works is that—

"The Buddhists of Upper India (of whom the Phenician Canaanite, Melchizedek, was a priest) who built the Pyramids, Stonehenge, Carnac, &c., will be shown to have founded all the ancient mythologies of the world, which, however varied and corrupted in recent times, were originally one, and that one founded on principles sublime, beautiful, and true."

These works contain an immense quantity of learning, very honestly put together. I presume the enormous number of facts, and the goodness of the index, to be the reasons why the *Anacalypsis* found a permanent place in the *old* reading-room of the British Museum, even before the change which greatly increased the number of books left free to the reader in that room.

Mr. Higgins, whom I knew well in the last six years of his life, and respected as a good, learned, and (in his own way) *pious* man, was thoroughly and completely the man of a system. He had that sort of mental connexion with his theory that made his statements of his authorities trustworthy: for, besides perfect integrity, he had no bias towards alteration of facts: he saw his system in the way the fact was presented to him by his authority, be that what it might.

I never could quite make out whether Godfrey Higgins took that system which he traced to the Buddhists to have a Divine origin or to be the result of good men's meditations. Himself a strong theist, and believer in a future state, one would suppose that he would refer a *universal* religion, spread in different forms over the whole earth from one source, directly to the universal Parent. And this I suspect he hid, whether he knew it or not. The external evidence is balanced. In his preface he says—

“I cannot help smiling when I consider that the priests have objected to admit my former book, *the Celtic Druids*, into libraries, because it was antichristian; and it has been attacked by Deists, because it was superfluously religious. The learned Deist, the Rev. R. Taylor [already mentioned] has designated me as *the religious* Mr. Higgins.”

The time will come when some profound historian of literature will make himself much clearer on the point than I am.

The triumphal Chariot of Friction: or a familiar elucidation of the origin of magnetic attraction, &c. &c. By William Pope. London, 1829, 4to.

Part of this work is on a dipping-needle of the author's construction. It must have been under the impression that a book of naval magnetism was proposed, that a great many officers, the Royal Naval Club, &c., lent their names to the subscription list. How must they have been surprised to find, right opposite to the list of subscribers, the plate presenting “the three emphatic letters J. A. O.” And how much more when they saw it set forth that if a square be inscribed in a circle, a circle within that, then a square again, &c., it is impossible to have more than fourteen circles, let the first circle be as large as you please. From this the seven

attributes of God are unfolded. And further, that all matter was *moral*, until Lucifer *churned* it into *physical* "as far as the third circle in Deity": this Lucifer, called Leviathan in Job, being thus the moving cause of chaos. I shall say no more, except that the friction of the air is the cause of magnetism.

Remarks on the Architecture, Sculpture, and Zodiac of Palmyra; with a Key to the Inscriptions. By B. Prescott. London, 1830, 8vo.

Mr. Prescott gives the sign of the zodiac a Hebrew origin.

Epitome de mathématiques. Par F. Jacotot, Avocat. 3ième édition. Paris, 1830, 8vo. (pp. 18).

Méthode Jacotot. Choix de propositions mathématiques. Par P. Y. de Séprés. 2nde édition. Paris, 1830, 8vo. (pp. 82).

Of Jacotot's method, which had some vogue in Paris, the principle was *Tout est dans tout*, and the process *Apprendre quelque chose, et à y rapporter tout le reste*. The first tract has a proposition in conic sections and its preliminaries: the second has twenty exercises, of which the first is finding the greatest common measure of two numbers, and the last is the motion of a point on a surface, acted on by given forces. This is topped up with the problem of sound in a tube, and a slice of Laplace's theory of the tides. All to be studied until known by heart, and all the rest will come, or at least join on easily when it comes. There is much truth in the assertion that new knowledge hooks on easily to a little of the old, thoroughly mastered. The day is coming when it will be found out that crammed erudition, got up for examinations, does not cast out any hooks for more.

Lettre à MM. les Membres de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, contenant un développement de la réfutation du système de la gravitation universelle, qui leur a été présentée le 30 août, 1830. Par Félix Passot. Paris, 1830, 8vo.

Works of this sort are less common in France than in England. In France there is only the Academy of Sciences to go to: in England there is a reading public out of the Royal Society, &c.

(*To be continued.*)
